

VioletsFun

The Violet Barn newsletter

September 2020 - No. 79

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Our calendar:

September 15, 2020.

International orders must be placed by this date for shipment week of September 21 .

Note to international customers:
Due to Covid-19, delays in transit on international orders have been more common

All of our fall shows have been cancelled. If all goes well, we will hope to see everyone at a show next spring.

Free stuff and how to get it!

2021 AVSA Show awards.

Best Robinson collections
1st place: \$200
2nd place: \$100

Write a review.

Write a review before ordering, good or bad, we'd like to know. Get a free plant added to order.

Contact us:

email. comments@violetbarn.com

mail. POB 9, Naples, NY 14512

phone. 585-374-8592
Mon. thru Sat., 12-5 pm ET

What's New:

LE Forest Folk. New Russian semiminiature hybrid. Semidouble white and green bells over medium green foliage. A fast, easy, grower and very heavy bloomer.

(Some of) What's Back : [Pearcea](#)



These gesneriads can often be mistaken for kohleria and are just as easy to grow and bloom. *Pearcea* are also rhizomatous, making them easy to care for and tolerant of neglect.

They are vigorous, upright, growers that look best when kept under control with occasional pruning to give a full appearance. Provide bright, but not intense light (either natural or artificial), and keep soil moist, but not soggy nor dry. Because they are so tolerant, they are good specimens for natural light or for windows that are otherwise less than ideal. More than once we've found long forgotten plants blooming happily despite our neglect.

We grow a handful of species, two of which are shown here, [sp. Ecuador](#) at far left, and [schimpfii](#) to its right.

Much more! Check the website for all of the newest varieties.

What's News:

Our shop remains closed to visitors at this time. September and October are very heavy shipping months, this year more than usual. We begin processing orders on Fridays and start packing on Mondays. Even with "all hands on board" we sometimes don't mail the last of the orders until Wednesday. This is why we state "week of" in our order confirmations. Please be patient with both us and the USPS--we continue to guarantee safe arrival of your order regardless of delays.

Inventory updates. [Aeschynanthus](#) and [Alsobia](#) are again in inventory after a long absence. We are currently working on many of the other gesneriads and will relist them as they become available. A full listing of trailing African violets will return within next week or so. An expanded list of [Kohleria](#) now appears, and we continue to add to it--including our "seller's choice" [special offer](#).

My plant "looks like this"



If it does, it has a "neck", the bare trunk above soil level and below the lowest row of leaves. It's not the result of anything done wrong, since all African violets will develop one over time as the lower, older, leaves are removed

Our shop and glasshouse at:

7209 County Road 12
Naples, New York 14512

Sorry, our shop is closed to visitors at this time.

Place an order for pickup!

For those living locally, we are offering [pickup service](#). Save on shipping, and we'll have your plants waiting for you.

Are you a member?

Consider joining the African Violet Society of America. Sign up through our website and get a free plant! For more information, visit www.avsa.org

Has your collection grown far beyond violets? Consider joining the Gesneriad Society. For more info: www.gesneriadsociety.org



and the plant continues to grow. Undealt with, it will only grow longer, sometimes bending or twisting under the weight of the plant above it. Your violet will be both healthier, and more attractive, if dealt with earlier, rather than later.

This is one reason we suggest repotting your violet at least once a year, and preferably, every six to nine months. Our purpose in repotting isn't always a larger pot--the one shown, for example, is a semiminiature that will never outgrow a 2.5" pot. What we can do, though, is lower the plant further into it's pot, hiding the neck in fresh soil. Do this by removing enough soil from the bottom of the root ball so that the plant can be slid lower into the pot. Don't be afraid to remove a few roots and older, lower, leaves as well. The whole idea behind repotting is to give your plant a fresh start! Repot when both the existing and new soil are slightly moist. This will make your job easier and be less stressful for the plant. Add enough fresh soil to fill the pot and cover the neck.

When done, the neck should not be visible and the lowest row of leaves should be at the level of the pot rim. If done before the neck grows too long, it will be easier to do and your plant won't suffer much of a setback, if any. After repotting, water only moderately (moist, not soggy), since roots will need to reestablish themselves. For a more detailed "how to", visit our [plant care pages](#).

This month's question

I purchased four beautiful plants a few months ago. They are doing great. In preparation for repotting, I ordered the wicking soil and prepared a test pot to see how wet the soil got. It's really wet. I'd like to use self-watering pots, but I think they will be too wet. Is there anything I should do?

The premise behind self-watering pots, wicking, or any other self-watering method, is to keep the soil wet all of the time. The soil will feel quite wet. Perlite will absorb less water than other soil ingredients like peat or vermiculite. Adding it to your potting mix will help aerate the soil, so not everything around the plants root system is water or material containing much water. Typical "wicking" soils will contain much greater amounts of perlite for this reason. Our "regular" (all purpose) soil mix, for example, contains only about 10% perlite (the remainder about equal amounts of peat and vermiculite). This is what we grow most of our plants in, since we don't constant water. Our wicking mix, though, contains well over 50% perlite. If you use prepackaged "African violet" potting soils sold at most department stores or home centers, you will likely need to add perlite to make them suitable for constant watering.

Of course, other less water-absorbent materials can be used. In the "old" days, sand was popular, but this is heavy, messy, and needs to be sterile. Horticultural charcoal is also an option, but this can be harder to find and more costly. Some mixes will use styrofoam beads, as well.

When using a self-watering system, it is a good practice to not keep your plant too wet immediately after repotting. It will need time to develop new roots into the fresh soil. Before this happens, you are providing more water than it can use. Water from the top until you see the plant start to produce new growth, indicating that roots are established into the new soil. At this point you can place on the water reservoir.

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